

CQC local authority assessments

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Update on local authority assessments

- We are currently halfway through our 2-year programme of baselining how well local authorities are meeting their social care duties under part 1 of the Care Act.
- We've heard from local authorities that our assessments are useful in helping them to make immediate improvements by identifying strengths and any gaps.
- Our aim is to shine a light on social care, identifying local good practice and sharing this nationally.
- We're committed to making our processes as efficient and meaningful as possible for local authorities and our own teams and continue to learn and iterate as we go.

Update on CQC

- Following the recent reviews carried out about CQC we:
 - Sir Julian Hartley has started as Chief Executive
 - Recruiting to align to sector expertise with 4 Chief Inspector roles
 - Reviewing our assessment approach, which includes our assessment framework and methodology
- Independent reviews have focused on our provider regulation work but for local authority assessments the recommendation was to continue to evolve and improve local authority assessments
- We are committed to continuous improvement and working with the sector to undertake this

Quality statements we focus on for local authority assessments

Theme 1: Working with People

- Assessing needs
- Supporting people to live healthier lives
- Equity in experience and outcomes

Theme 2: Providing Support

- Care provision, Integration, and continuity
- Partnerships and communities

Theme 3: Ensuring Safety

- Safe systems, pathways and transitions
- Safeguarding

Theme 4: Leadership

- Governance, management and sustainability
- Learning, improvement and innovation

Who are the assessment team?

- Our teams have a breadth of health, social care and regulatory experience.
- They include social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, commissioners and people who have delivered care and run services.
- Our teams work alongside executive reviewers and specialist advisors.

Executive reviewers will be substantively or recently employed within a local authority, the Local Government Association (LGA) or Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). They will provide expert peer perspective to inform our findings and judgements relating to leadership and governance.

Specialist advisors will be managers and leaders who are currently working within a local authority or other relevant organisation. They will provide specialist advice in relation to how a local authority is delivering its Care Act duties. This will help ensure our judgements are informed by professional knowledge and experience.

Key elements: What local authorities can expect

We will write to a local authority to notify them that they will be assessed.
During the assessment process we will:

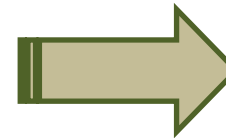
Undertake evidence gathering activity, building on information return request



Corroborate evidence through on-site interviews



Produce and publish a report on our findings



During this period of time we will be evidence gathering. This process could take up to 6 months.

Gathering evidence

Peoples experience:

- We will use feedback directly from people using services, for example through case tracking and speaking with carers
- We will use feedback from community groups and local user groups

Feedback from staff and leaders:

- We will interview staff and leaders to gather their views
- We will hold drop-in sessions for staff to share their experiences

Feedback from partners:

- We will speak with relevant partners to gather their views
- We will gather views from care providers including; via provider forums at local authorities and surveying providers before site visits to ask for their feedback

Who do we talk to?

- Voluntary and Community Groups
- Healthwatch
- Local CQC teams
- LA senior leadership team
- Unpaid carers
- People we case-track
- Providers
- Front line staff teams
- Executive leaders
- NHS/ICS/safeguarding board partners
- Chief Executive
- Portfolio holder and shadow portfolio holder
- People using services – co-production groups
- Others as needed e.g. housing

Emerging themes

- **Support for unpaid carers** is an area where there is a need for improvement including;
 - better identification,
 - improved range and capacity of services,
 - more timely assessments
 - personalisation of support in differing needs dependent on age and needs of the person being cared for (i.e. adult carer of a young person, children caring for adults)

Emerging themes

- **Greater understanding of local population equality and diversity** issues is needed
- We're seeing an increasing focus on **prevention work** as a strategic aim
- Continued impact of **recruitment pressures**, especially Occupational Therapists
- We continue to see that outcomes are best when there are **strong relationships with partner agencies**

Emerging themes

- **Data is used inconsistently** which makes it harder to effectively plan and monitor services
- **Transitions for young people moving to adult are often challenging**, especially if it does not start early
- We are seeing **good practice in the use of reablement care** to support people to regain independence
- Keeping up with change is hard and **transformation work has an impact** on the ability to deliver services

We're seeing some great things!

There were a number of ways in which people could access support from the local authority, including the contact centre, Access Harrow, which was the local authority's initial point of contact and the Conversation Café which people spoke very positively about, where they receive support and are signposted to other services they may need.

London Borough of Harrow: local authority assessment

Learning and improving

Our methodology will not change during our baselining activity however we are improving, enhancing and refining the existing approach in response to what we are learning and hearing.

- We're working with the Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), provider representatives and voluntary and community sector organisations on several improvement areas. These include:
- our guidance on how we carry out our assessments
- our relationships with directors of adult social services and regional ADASS groups outside of the formal assessments
- enhancing our site visits by focusing on the key areas of commissioning, safeguarding, prevention, specific client groups, and introducing case sampling
- enhancing the provider voice – including refining our provider survey
- how we gather and use people's experiences in our assessments.

Common Misconceptions

- Our judgements are made against the Care Act responsibilities
- We look at the experiences of people at the time of the assessments
- Different parts of the CQC team analyse information or speak to people, it all forms a picture of quality
- We take all the evidence into account – data is one part
- Performing better than a low average will not make scores automatically 'good'

1. **Complete a self-assessment** to help you understand how well you're delivering your social care duties, what's working well and how you are addressing areas of improvement.
2. **Understand local people's experiences** of social care and **involve them** in assessing your performance.
3. Gather, review and validate data and information for inclusion in the **information return**
4. **Brief councillors and lead members, staff and partners** on what to expect from the assessment process and how they can be involved.
5. Review **assessment reports from other local authorities**.
6. Review our **local authority assessment guidance** on our website.
7. **Draw on learning and support materials** provided by LGA, Partners in Care and Health, ADASS and others.

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Local authority and ICS Bulletin

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